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One letter¹ and 55 footnotes²: the assassination of Llywd ap Iwan by the outlaws Wilson and Evans³

Mike Pearson

A happy New Year to you all
Arroyo Pescado or (Nant y Pysgod)⁴
Colonia 16 de Octubre
Via Neuquen B. Aires
South America
Wednesday 5 January 1910

¹ It is hand written, in Welsh; five sheets, nine sides.

For reproduction: < <http://www.glaniad.com/index.php?lang=en&subj=5705&id=34726&size=2&t=2> > [08/05/2013].

For photocopy: National Library of Wales, NLW Facs. 369/12.

For Welsh transcription: Ann Parry Owen, 'Llofruddiaeth Llywd ap Iwan: adroddiad llygad-dyst', *Trafodion Anrhydeddus Gymdeithas y Cymmrodorion*, (Gwasg Gee: Dinbych, 1989), pp.129-34.

Spelling, punctuation and orthography in this commissioned English translation mirror the Welsh original. All words in italics are in English in the original; all underlinings are as they appear in the letter.

² The concept of this article is to create an annotation of the letter from complementary sources – historical and contemporary, scholarly and creative – in the manner of editions of Greek and Latin texts or Shakespeare's plays; or as an 'analogue hypertext'. The translation of the letter is by Catrin Beard; all other translations of textual extracts are my own. The footnotes draw upon my own scripts for several theatrical performances and from published works, including those of Welsh novelist and historian of Patagonia R. Bryn Williams: 'The novels I liked most were some of Zane Grey with their literary description of the life of the *'Wild West'*. And having read these and watched *'westerns'* in the cinema I was drawn to follow the example of Tom Mix and his like. It's obvious that this had a great influence on me when I started to write novels about the wild life of the pampas in Patagonia.' R. Bryn Williams, *Prydydd Yr Paith*, trans. Mike Pearson (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1983), p.40.

³ 'The most emotional and grievous event for the Welsh in the Andes was the murder of Llywd ap Iwan.' R. Bryn Williams, *Yr Wladfa*, trans. Mike Pearson (Cardiff: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1962), p.244.

⁴ Nant-y-Pysgod=Stream of Fishes.

'The C.M.C. opened a branch of the business in the year 1906 in Nant-y-Pysgod: an ideal place for the purpose since it is beside the road that leads from the pampas to Esquel and Cwm Hyfryd, though there is nothing there today except a memorial stone to mark the place.' Williams, *Yr Wladfa*, p.244.

'At this time Nant-y-Pysgod was only three houses: a zinc shed to store wool and the long shop building with a small office on the farthest end.' Williams, *Yr Wladfa*, p.245.

'These are privileged locations; sites of memory described in the context of significant communal events and recognised as such by the real or potential audience. The significance of such events then becomes part of the mythology of the community. The psychological impact of such episodes and incidents raises them to a mythical level [c]'. Paul W. Birt, 'The Individual and the Community in the Auto/biography of Early Welsh Patagonia (1885-1935)', in *Patagonia: Myths and Realities*, eds. Fernanda Peñaloza, Jason Wilson & Claudio Canaparo (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), pp.117-144 (p.125).

Dear Parents⁵

It's only about a fortnight since I last wrote to you with no good nor bad news. I received your letter with the Memorial Card for Jane Jones Tyn y Celyn and I was very sad to hear the news, but the Herald Gymraeg⁶ had informed us here before receiving your letter, I would ask you to tell the family that I sympathise with them in their bereavement, also I was pleased to hear that you are all well! David⁷ and W.M. Thomas left here for Chubut⁸ with the wagons⁹ about 10 days ago! Well father and mother I have a solemn tale to tell you in this letter regarding the sad death of my master in this place Mr Llwyd ap Iwan¹⁰ the oldest son of the late Michael

⁵ Mr David Roberts and Mrs. Ann Roberts, Foelas House, Capel Garmon, Wales. See Owen, 'Llofruddiaeth Llwyd ap Iwan', p.130.

For photograph: <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/lluniau-collen/799632205/in/set-72157600688994235/>> [07/05/13].

⁶ *Yr Herald Cymraeg* – Welsh weekly newspaper, founded 1855, Caernarfon.

⁷ His twin brother David (Dai) Roberts; born 15 July 1888.

⁸ 'The first group of Welsh settlers landed from the *Mimosa* at Puerto Madryn in Argentina on 28 July 1865. Many were escaping the tribulations of the tenant farmer – high rents, bad harvests, the enclosure of common land. Others, with little experience of husbandry and agricultural practice, were fleeing the privations of industrial life in the Welsh valleys. But a few were fired by the vision of a 'new Wales' of political, religious, educational and linguistic freedom, a land 'flowing with milk and honey' – *Y Wladfa Gymreig* (the Welsh Colony). Their dream: cultural, social and legal self-determination; economic self-sufficiency; independence; statehood [...] All were totally unprepared for the conditions they encountered: harsh climate, lack of rainfall, barren landscape. It took them four months to get off the beach!'

'Yet the Chubut Valley, an area 70 miles by 5 miles in Patagonia, rapidly became the focus of Welsh aspiration and emigration. In the fifty years prior to the First World War, it received over 10,000 immigrants. Survival was always a struggle, an endless grind of floods, crop failures and material hardship. But the accidental discover of a technique of irrigation using the snow-melt waters of the river secured the prosperity of the settlement and led to the establishment of that rectangular grid of canals, roads, avenues of poplars, farm plots and small towns which exists today.'

'Large families and lack of irrigable land soon put pressure on the colony. There was need of expansion and by 1884 expeditions were venturing out over the pampas. Eventually, Cwm Hyfryd, a pastured valley in the Andes, was discovered and quickly settled. Although a wagon trip of twenty-eight days separated the two communities, by the turn of the century the province of Chubut had become one of the great bread-baskets of South America, its wool famous throughout the world.' Mike Pearson, 'The Dream in the Desert', *Performance Research*, 1:1 (1996), pp.5-15 (p.6).

⁹ 'Mule train. Eight mules to each wagon, harnessed in two rows, first five, then three. Twenty-eight days up to the Andes hauling grain; twenty-eight days back piled with fleeces. A floating space, a place without place that exists by itself, adrift in the ocean of the pampas [...]'. Mike Pearson, *Patagonia* (unpublished script for Brith Gof theatre company touring production, premiered at Theatre Taliesin, Swansea, 1992).

¹⁰ Llwyd ap Iwan was an explorer, surveyor, map-maker, herdsman, farmer, prospector, hydraulic engineer.

'And what can I tell you about him?

- that he was the son of Michael D. Jones, chief advocate of Welsh emigration to Patagonia
- that he was born in Bala, and in his youth something of an athlete
- that he trained as a civil engineer, in England and in Germany
- that he would marry Myfanwy Ruffudd, eldest daughter of Lewis Jones [...]
- that he would father five children...
- that he would leave them for months on end [...]
- that he didn't arrive in Patagonia until 1886, as an engineer on A.P. Bell's railway project [...]
- that over the ten years, he saw more of Chubut than any other European before him: exploring, surveying, mapping, observing, writing [...]
- that in 1888 he was one of the group that traveled from the Chubut Valley to Cwm Hyfryd in the Andes, to prepare the way for settlers. In a photograph titled 'Making the road into the Andes, near Hafn y Mynach, 1888' he stands in the centre, wearing a white coat, his hand on his belt.

<<http://www.glanriad.com/index.php?lang=en&id=33680&t=2>> [07/05/13].

D. Jones of Bala¹¹ that occurred a week ago tonight at about half past six o'clock. The poor man was shot by a highway thief and murderer. To begin the story. I and

[See also: NLW MS 7257A 'Ymchwiladaith i'r Andes', being Llwyd ap Iwan's journal of a journey to the Andes, 1888, together with measurements relating to 'Camlas Gaiman' and other water channels in Patagonia.]

[See also: NLW MS 7258-9C. Two exercise books containing a journal, written in 1888 by Llwyd ap Iwan, of life in the Welsh Colony in Patagonia; the journal was sent by the writer to his father, the Rev. Michael D. Jones, for publication in Welsh newspapers.]

– that in 1889 in a letter to his parents, he fears that he will be unable to write to them for some time as he must 'face the desert' once more but manages to publish *The Chubut Valley. The Origin, History, Development and Prospects of the Welsh Colony, with an account of several Expeditions and Travels in Patagonia* [See: NLW MS 7260-2C.]

– that by 1891 he was involved in a gold rush in the Andes: 'that will result in salvation or damnation for the Welsh Settlement.'

– that later in 1891 he married, hoping to start farming but was often away, surveying for others. And that it rained a lot – 'which makes everywhere miserable.'

– that in 1893 he founded the Phoenix Patagonian Mining Company

[See: NLW MS 18194A. RBW MS 20. Agreements between Llwyd ap Iwan and the Phoenix Patagonian Mining Co. 1897.]

– that by 1894 he was exploring again, high in the Andes looking for a route to the Pacific

– and that by 1896 he was working for the Southern Railway [...]

– that in 1894, he proposed a remarkable engineering scheme. In the region of Laguna Buenos Aires he realised that the entire drainage pattern had been altered by glacial deposits at the end of the last Ice Age. If this could be unblocked, then two hundred square miles could be returned to arable use - seven hundred farms. But it would require a canal, one hundred and fifty miles long, six yards wide and one and a half feet deep [...]. Perhaps the desert was already beginning to turn him...

– that in 1899 he was in London and also in Bala where he cut a remarkable figure in black *fedora* and tight black suit.

['Then in 1901 the Chubut Valley suffered tremendous floods: first a raging torrent, then an immense lake. Rawson was inundated, Gaiman half-drowned, dozens of isolated farms destroyed [...]. Many were reduced to destitution, amongst them, Llwyd ap Iwan.' Mike Pearson, *From Memory* (unpublished script for solo performance, premiered at the Welsh Folk Museum, Cardiff, 1991).]

– that late in 1901 he wrote a letter, to Cecil Rhodes, hinting that as becoming Spanish was intolerable, the entire population of Chubut could be transplanted to South Africa! He also added some words to the effect that the settlers had often taken up arms in their own defence. This was true, but it hadn't happened since the earliest days of the settlement and then only against bands of marauding Chilean Indians. The words of a desperate man [...]. Again in Gaiman, it was decided to send three representatives to the Transvaal. A request was sent to the Colonial Office in London to defray the costs of this expedition. This was almost refused in London as a hoax as no one would believe that there was such a name as Llwyd ap Iwan! Still, on November 20th 1901 he set sail from Buenos Aires aboard 'The Langton Grange' and arrived in Durban eighteen days later. Out on the veldt, he felt at home. It was dry but it could be irrigated. But the politics of South Africa were complex and confused. He lingered on and on in Pretoria. Finally, in frustration, he left for home, again aboard 'The Langton Grange', on October 31st 1902.

– that in 1902 he saw the floods coming, made preparations to spend the winter on the mountains and then when they came worried for the future of the Welsh Settlement, many feeling they had made a mistake in coming

– that in 1904 he was farming in the Andes

And there we lose sight of him.

Why did this man end up as manager of the trading post at Nant-y-Pysgod?' Mike Pearson, *Welsh Landscapes* (Chapter: Cardiff, unpublished script for Pearson/Brookes rehearsed public reading, 2008).

'At the beginning of this century, he went to live in the Andes, and besides surveying his own land, he was chosen to survey a new branch of the Marketing Company in Nant-y-Pysgod.' R. Bryn Williams, *Crydro Patagonia*, trans. Mike Pearson (Llandybïe: Llyfrau'r Dryw, 1960), p.54.

¹¹ Michael D. Jones was the son of the Rev. Michael Jones, Independent minister and first Principal of the Bala Independent College. He succeeded his father as in 1854, where he stayed until 1892.' See: <<http://archiveshub.ac.uk/features/patagonia-mdjb.html>> [07/05/13].

'Highly critical of the Tory landowners who, in his opinion, treated the Welsh people like serfs, he saw little use in emigrating to the USA or Australia to start afresh as the Welsh language would only be diluted.

He therefore searched for a place where Welsh people could follow their own culture without the influence of others, and was given favourable reviews of the Chubut Valley in Patagonia, a sparsely populated region of Argentina.'

Mr D.O. Williams¹² who is at the Cooperative¹³ here with me were witnesses of the circumstances.¹⁴

So I shall start my story like this, but let me tell you at First not to be afraid. I am *alright*. This story has already been sent to the Rhedegydd and it will probably be in all the papers in the old country in a short time.¹⁵

Things took place exactly like this. On the evening of Wednesday 29 of last month which is a week tonight.¹⁶ This day was not a pleasant day at all¹⁷, the Wind blew against the door of the store all day so it had to be closed¹⁸, and only a few customers came in during the day.¹⁹ Well now it was drawing towards closing time which is six

‘Michael Jones did not visit Patagonia himself, but stayed in Wales to raise money for those abroad and to educate a new generation in the merits of Welsh patriotism, including David Lloyd George.’

< <http://www.welshholidaycottages.com/wales/welsh-colony.htm> > [08/05/2013].

¹² ‘[...] there were several young Welshmen working with him in the business.’ R. Bryn Williams, *Cymry Patagonia*, trans. Mike Pearson (Aberystwyth: Gwasg Aberystwyth, 1942), p.138.

‘[...] two young Welshmen and an Indian worked under him.’ R. Bryn Williams, *Gwladfa Patagonia: The Welsh Colony in Patagonia 1865-2000* (Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 2000), p.90.

‘He was employed as a clerk by Llwyd ap Iwan [...]’. Owen, ‘Llofruddiaeth Llwyd ap Iwan’, p.129.

¹³ Compañia Mercantil de Chubut; Cwmni Masnachol Camwy: the ‘Welsh Cooperative’.

‘Tin can: stamped on the base with the words ‘Compagnia Mercantile de Chubut’. The middlemen in B. A., as Buenos Aires is known to all, were getting fat, the industrious Welsh an easy touch. But not so naive that they couldn’t see the tables of the money-lenders in the temple.

‘What to do then? Hire ships to transport grain and fleeces. Return with goods bought wholesale, sell retail and share the profits. But what could they possibly want in a tin? Corned beef from Fray Bentos? Beans, to pretend they really were cowboys? More likely, it contained the fruits of the valley – plums, peaches, tomatoes – to be guzzled from the sticky fingers of mule drivers, to stand in piles at Nant-y-Pysgod, to bring a small delight to the bare table of some isolated farm in the Andes.’ Pearson, *Patagonia*.

¹⁴ ‘The Indian is in the shed preparing for the next mule-train through – eight or ten wagons, eight mules to each harnessed in two rows, first five, then three. The grain on the way up is fine, rats jumping ship the only problem. But the stench of the fleeces on the way back – lanolin soaked into wood, leather, bodies – hangs in the heat for days. And the mules are always cussed, wilful.’ Pearson, *Patagonia*.

¹⁵ *Y Rhedegydd* – Welsh weekly newspaper, founded 1885, Blaenau Ffestiniog.

‘We await the post with details.’ *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 26 January 1910.

¹⁶ ‘About a month before this sad event, a fire broke out in the store in the night and close enough to him, his wife and baby to burn to death but mercifully they succeeded in escaping but in the effort his hands were badly burned by the fire.’ *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 26 January 1910.

‘On the night of December 28, 1909, a torch was thrown through the window of the store. The proprietor, Llwyd ap Iwan, was inside and fired several shots to drive off the robbers, but burned his hands badly putting out the fire.’ Tim Cahill, ‘Butch Cassidy Meets the Penguin’, 1999. <<http://byliner.com/tim-cahill/articles/butch-cassidy-meets-the-penguin>> [07/05/2013].

¹⁷ ‘It is the afternoon of December 29th, 1909, mid summer. The scattered buildings of Nant-y-Pysgod stand indistinct: shimmering in a mirage-laden heat. On the lake, black-necked swans and flamingos idle. Red-and-blue macaws perch on the hitching rail.’

‘A few chickens scratch amongst the rubbish – bottles, empty tins, the desiccated carcasses of wagons with broken axles, spoke-less wheels.’ Pearson, *Patagonia*.

¹⁸ ‘At the door, the other Welshman, tired of brushing dust from the rows of tin cans – each stamped with the name Compañia Mercantil de Chubut – from saddles, harnesses, boxes of shotgun cartridges. Dust that sticks to anything wet: eyes, the dribble from a nose, sweat on the back of the neck, an open wound.’ Pearson, *Patagonia*.

¹⁹ ‘Business is slow.’

‘There is no seduction here – no half-hidden, half exposed.

No objects of desire.

No one to call you by name [...]

No one to look you in the eye [...]

No one to see you, from over there [...]

No trees with the promise of shade.

No verticals at all, just an endless horizontal.

o'clock, and my master Llwyd ap Iwan said well *Boys* you may as well close nobody else will come here tonight, but when I started to close the back of the store and the windows an old Indian²⁰ arrived at the store, he was quite plain and very *slow* and D.O. Williams began serving him, and I continued to start closing the store so as to be ready by the time he left and Mr Llwyd ap Iwan went to the House and he was not expected back at all.²¹ After I had closed everywhere apart from the counter room I went back to stand by the Counter ready to go out. This old Indian was still buying and he had a paper worth 50 dollars that he wanted to change, and there was only a little petty cash in the store and the safe so I persuaded him to spend as much of it as he could. By this time a man came in that I knew, Mr Francisco Arbe, I served him and as soon as he said in Spanish that's all my boy, another man arrived at the store²², and he started talking to Francisco in Spanish about a saddle and I understood from his talk that he was an Englishman and I approached him to ask what he wanted, but firstly Francisco Arbe bade me goodnight in Spanish and he went out. So I now had the chance to start serving this Englishman as another man, and D.O. Williams was still serving this old Indian. The Englishman and I started to chat a little and I did not think this man any worse than anybody else.²³ And exactly

The only possible shot is the pan.

As easy to lose your mind as to lose your way.'

'It's worrying, being out in the desert, no frames for what's going on.

But erect a vertical – a post for hitching, a doorway for standing, a wall for leaning – and *that's* when desire begins.

The desire for that position, that place [...]

And that, unfortunately, is when men draw guns.

As they did on that day in December.' Pearson, *Patagonia*.

²⁰ 'The Tehueches were "a noble, happy people": the inevitable pictorial fate of all extinct peoples. They lived for the day. They never kept food. If they didn't catch anything, they didn't eat. Bread appeared as manna. '*Poco bara, poco bara*', they would cry. They would give a horse in exchange, or blankets, or lessons in hunting and fishing, or ostrich feathers. Or they would just take it, walk in and take it. They blundered against civilisation, against the Argentinian army, like a dodo against the legs of a starving sailor.'

'The bread swelled in their bellies. It never nurtured them. Then came measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever, diphtheria. However humane, in Welsh – in this aspect at least – were true Conquistadores.' Pearson, *Patagonia*.

²¹ '[...] Llwyd ap Iwan, left the shop and went across to his house for tea. Both his arms were bandaged to the elbows as he had put out an unexplained night fire with his bare hands.' Bruce Chatwin, *In Patagonia* (London: Vintage, 1998), p.69.

'A condor sails overhead. Time passes.' Pearson, *Patagonia*.

²² 'Two figures on the horizon, too soon to know whether coming or going [...]' Pearson, *Patagonia*.

'Two young men came to the village one day, and tied their horses outside the store.' Williams, *Cymry Patagonia*, p.138.

'One hot afternoon, and the village all at *siesta*, they came there as leisurely as usual.'

Williams, *Cymry Patagonia*, p.138.

'They were regular customers and were well known in the Cordillera as carters and crack shots.' Chatwin, *In Patagonia*, p.69.

²³ 'Around that time a man and his wife named Place and their friend Ryan came to live in the Andes. There were rather decent people and became friendly with the Welsh, visiting them in their own homes.' Williams, *Y Wladfa*, p.244.

'A number of Americans came to the foot of the Andes, bought a ranch there, and lived courteously and amicably amongst the Welsh. From time to time there was news of bandits attacking and stealing money from various banks all over the country, but nobody knew that it was these Americans who were responsible, until secret agents from the United States tracked them down. The three leaders disappeared, leaving their assistants to carry on, but they were less skilful and more cruel than their masters.' Williams, *Gwladfa Patagonia*, p.90.

'Two young men called Wilson and Bob Evans came with them as a result and Mans Gibbon one of the Cwm Hyfryd boys soon went to work for them. Around 35 years old were the three, dressed like United States cowboys, carrying two revolvers in their belt. They had no equal as marksmen. They fixed a pole in

like this he started to purchase, and I shall tell you the story exactly as it was and what he said. He asked me like this at first *Have you any saddles here. Yes* I said and the same time asked him *what price Sir The best* he said, *I want it to be of good quality*, and I opened the place where we kept the saddles and returned with one for him, and he started to examine it, and asked its price, and I replied it is 92 dollars, *without stirrups nor belly band*, o he said *its rather dear will you show me another one*, yes I said *I think I have one more of this quality* and I went to fetch it, *alright* he said *I think Ill take them. Well Have you any stirrups* yes I said and fetched him a bundle to examine, *what price ar these* he said 6.30 I said, *alright Ill take two pairs of these*. Then he asked me again whether we had suits here, *no* I said *we are out of them at present, wel let me see some of those corderoy Trousers*, and I gave him some. *Very nice indeed, its a pity our camp men would not have some of this stuff* he said. And he asked me now where Mr ap Iwan was.²⁴ He is in the house I said²⁵ *will he come back again to night. I dont think so* I said *for its closing time*. At this point his partner came in, and the two of them started talking to each other. *What shall we do, we cant take these away before we see Mr Ap Iwan*. And of course they asked me again about Mr ap Iwan and off I went²⁶ to fetch him from the house²⁷,

the middle of a field, drawing a line in the dust in a large circle around it, there running their horse around the line holding the reins in the left hand and firing at the pole with the right hand until they broke it like a saw going through it.'

'They left their young men behind and those tried to carry on the business but more negligently and cruelly than their masters.' Williams, *Y Wladfa*, pp.244-5.

'First, from the viewpoint of Wilson and Evans as they ride into the yard: commotion on the veranda – pointing, waving, brushing of hair, wiping of hands on aprons [...] Their arrival comes as welcome relief. They are regular customers, courteous, amicable, and not a little exotic. They'd come down from Wyoming and purchased a ranch out on the sierras. And the Americans are crack shots.'

'Then, from the viewpoint of Bob Roberts – with fantasy images of hunting buffalo and of driving cattle with the help of a handful of gauchos, whose Arab origins were betrayed by the dark colour of their skin and the voluminous nature of their trousers.'

'They dismount, beating dust from their riding coats, wiping sweat from their foreheads and tie their horses to the hitching rail. Their shotguns are left conspicuously strapped to their saddles.'

'They shake hands with the Welshmen.' Pearson, *Welsh Landscapes*.

'The oldest of the men explained that his name was Wilson, and he introduced his friend as Bob Evans. They were camping in the mountains, and they came down daily and chatted freely with the Welsh.' Williams, *Cymry Patagonia*, p.138.

'They went into the store, drawing their guns and threatening the Welshmen.' Williams, *Cymry Patagonia*, p.138.

'The next day, they say, six outlaws, including Boots and a woman, attacked the trading post.' Cahill, 'Butch Cassidy Meets the Penguin.'

²⁴ '[...]Wilson and Bob Evans, came into the trading post asking to see the manager.' Williams, *Gwladfa Patagonia*, p.90.

²⁵ "'He's in the house, having his tea,'" said one of the servants. "We've got an important matter to discuss with him, and it's urgent".' Williams, *Crwydro Patagonia*, p.54.

²⁶ 'Some minutes later his assistant Bobby Roberts, a soft-headed religious maniac, called over that Wilson and Evans had come to buy tack.' Chatwin, *In Patagonia*, p.69.

'Roberts calls over to the house that Wilson and Evans have arrived, to buy provisions. Well, perhaps that's how it would be in the movie. Certainly, what happens over the next few minutes is one of the mysteries of the desert.' Pearson, *Welsh Landscapes*.

²⁷ 'He looks up [...] senses what's coming [...] has long known.'

'And behold there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead and only I alone am escaped to tell thee.'

'And he looks at his hands, roughly bandaged to the elbows after an accident with an exploding oil lamp that almost set the place on fire.'

'When everything is self-evident, banal, at least you can look at your hands. For the skin is a map of accident, injury, labour. The scars are the marks of your history, some reassurance that time has passed. No other measure here, no world events – always far-off and in another place, none of those things others call 'The History' – landing, floods, revival.' Pearson, *Welsh Landscapes*.

and he was preparing to have his supper²⁸ and I told Mr ap Iwan that two gentlemen wanted to see him who are they he said, I don't know but they are two Englishmen.²⁹ So the two of us went to the store through the Front door to the store. Mr ap Iwan was a few seconds in front of me³⁰, and when I reached the other side of the counter the first man who spoke to me asked Mr ap Iwan *Have you a message for me*,³¹ *whats the name* said Mr ap Iwan. Jones he replied and at the same time he moved back to the door and drew another revolver³² and shouted "*Hands up, Deliver the Keys or you will be a dead man*" And by now the other of the these two Englishmen had jumped over the counter towards me and D.O. Williams, pointing a Revolver and shouting the same thing "*Hands Up*"³³ and of course the best thing to do was to obey. And of course by now the three of us were frightened³⁴ and Mr ap Iwan said to the Englishman next to him *You can have the keys & every cent there is in the place as long as you save my life, But let me tell you first, there is but very little money here at present*³⁵ Never mind said the Englishman *we have heard plenty of those Stories & Rubbish*,³⁶ *March off with that man at once & deliver every cent*³⁷ and Mr ap Iwan went with the one who had jumped over the counter; and the one who told him to go stayed with us. And he said to us to comfort us *Dont frighten Boys your life is safe as long as you do as you ar told*.³⁸ I heard Mr ap Iwan opening the safe, and giving the money to the thief, and the thief asked him

²⁸ 'Llwyd ap Iwan is taking tea – bitter green Peruvian *matte* drunk through a silver straw from a gourd – against the heat and the day, in the single-storied house.' Pearson, *Welsh Landscapes*.

²⁹ 'The young man went to the house to fetch Llwyd ap Iwan, the manager, and he said to his wife: "I'll come back straight away to finish my tea, and since the visitors are English, I'll also bring them with me".' Williams, *Y Wladfa*, p.245.

'Mirror. However arduous the journey, however unyielding the wagon springs, always take a mirror. For it shows you where you are not, looking back from a world where no sweat bleaches your hat-band, where no dust etches your skin, where no relentless roar deafens your ears.' Pearson, *Patagonia*.

³⁰ 'What he would never see was ap Iwan standing, putting on his jacket with great difficulty, looking in a mirror, as if preparing for a theatrical entrance; walking calmly across the yard, as the horses flicked flies with their tails and the flamingos took flight. What he would never know is what happened in that room.' Pearson, *Welsh Landscapes*.

'Ap Iwan walked back and found Evans covering Bobby Roberts, who was blubbing.' Chatwin, *In Patagonia*, p.69.

³¹ 'There is chat, about the unrelenting heat; a casual enquiry concerning the arrival of a letter.' Pearson, *Patagonia*.

³² 'When the manager said that there was no letter for him, the two bandits drew their guns, and forced Llwyd to go into the office with Wilson.' Williams, *Gwladfa Patagonia*, p.90.

³³ 'The other ordered the two servants and the Indian who worked there to turn and face the shelves with their hands up.' Williams, *Gwladfa Patagonia*, p.90.

'Bob Evans then ordered the servants to turn towards the shelves and keep their hands up.' Pearson, *Welsh Landscapes*.

³⁴ 'One of the youths began to cry . . .'. Williams, *Gwladfa Patagonia*, p.90.

³⁵ 'There's nothing in the safe,' ap Iwan said. But Wilson knew better. The Company was expecting a consignment of gold sovereigns to pay for the wool-clip. Chatwin, *In Patagonia*, p.69.

³⁶ 'They understood that a large sum of money would be sent there to Patagonia within a few days.' Williams, *Cymry Patagonia*, p.138.

³⁷ 'Llwyd ap Iwan was forced to go with Wilson to the office to seek the money.' Williams, *Cymry Patagonia*, p.138.

³⁸ '[...] and tired of his noise, Bob Evans asked him [...]'. Williams, *Cymry Patagonia*, p.139.

'Have you got a mother?'

'Yes'

'Would you like to see her again?'

'Yes'

'Well then, shut up, and he added, you'll have a good story to tell after today.' Williams, *Gwladfa Patagonia*, p.90.

'And there was a great silence.' Williams, *Cymry Patagonia*, p.139.

Is that all yes said Mr ap Iwan,³⁹ and I heard a sound like fighting⁴⁰ and a shot was fired⁴¹ and Mr ap Iwan gave a last sigh, but three shots were released after poor Mr ap Iwan gave the sigh.⁴² Of course it was clear to us that Mr ap Iwan was dead.⁴³ Well the murderer returned to the room to us and asked us to deliver the money that we knew about, and of course there was nothing to do but to obey, or our lives would go as well. In my drawer I had 30 dollars that belonged to a man from outside the business, and I said to the thief, *here you are take this it does not belong to the Company but you can do as you like with these*⁴⁴ and he let them be without touching them⁴⁵ and made me march back to my partner. After getting all the money one of them began to pull things down from the store lots of clothes, high *Boots, trousers, Silk Handkerchiefs, Top Coats, Shawl* and a lot of other things, and started to pack them on their

³⁹ 'After reaching the office, Llwyd was forced to open the safe [...]. Williams, *Gwladfa Patagonia*, p.91.
'Slowly, no sudden moves, he'd turned, knelt and opened up. A few Argentine banknotes lay scattered on the bottom. "Where's the money," shouted Wilson in a fury.' Pearson, *Welsh Landscapes*.
"There should be about fifty thousand dollars in it to pay for the wool". Williams, *Gwladfa Patagonia*, p.91.

[...] there was only a small amount of money in it [...]. Williams, *Y Wladfa*, p.246.

"You're out of luck. The sovereigns haven't come." Chatwin, *In Patagonia*, p.69.

"And they belong to the Indians", he said.' Chatwin, *In Patagonia*, p.69.

⁴⁰ 'The Welshman denied this, and he was called a liar. Some believe that Llwyd lost his temper, and attacked the other.' Williams, *Gwladfa Patagonia*, p.91.

'Another explanation is that it was the robber who lost his temper because he heard the other raise his voice threateningly [...]. Williams, *Y Wladfa*, p.246.

'Whatever the explanation, the sound of voices and of fighting was heard in the office.' Williams, *Gwladfa Patagonia*, p.91.

'Perhaps Llwyd ap Iwan, who was an agile and active man, was able to get hold of Wilson's wrist and turn the muzzle of the gun aside.' Williams, *Cymry Patagonia*, p.139.

'Except he was at a disadvantage, because a few days before this he burned his hands badly when an oil lamp exploded in the store and almost set the place on fire.' Williams, *Y Wladfa*, p.246.

'It is likely therefore that he was unable to defend himself against the barbaric attack.' *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 26 January 1910.

'It seems likely that Llwyd held the other man's wrist and forced him to drop the gun. They both slipped on a carpet and fell to the floor, thus giving the bandit a chance to draw another gun from his high boot [...]. Williams, *Gwladfa Patagonia*, p.91.

'But as he backed out of the office, his spur caught in an Indian rug. He tripped and the Welshman jumped him as he fell. Even with his bandaged hands he got hold of the revolver and fired. But there was no trigger. Wilson had taken the trigger off and feathered the mechanism. He reached for a miniature revolver strung round his neck and shot ap Iwan through the heart.' Chatwin, *In Patagonia*, p.69.

'[...] and he was shot dead by Wilson.' Williams, *Cymry Patagonia*, p.139.

⁴¹ '[...] and he struck the Welshman on his head...' Williams, *Y Wladfa*, p.246.

'Suddenly there came the sound of a shot from the office.' Williams, *Cymry Patagonia*, p.139.

⁴² '[...] a man known in North America as the Sundance Kid stepped into the room carrying a Winchester .45 rifle and killed him.' Cahill, 'Butch Cassidy Meets the Penguin.'

'And for other others, no dime-novel heroics. Wilson just butchered him like a mad dog in the afternoon. Pearson, *Patagonia*.

⁴³ 'Close up, the hand is blackened, the metal hot. On the other, a small starred hole in the front and [...]. Pearson, *Patagonia*.

'On the dusty floor, a body, and a single fly crawling over nostril and eyelid.' Pearson, *Welsh Landscapes*.
On 4 April 1910 Mihangel ap Iwan writes to his mother. 'He explains that his brother was killed instantly when the two bullets which were fired entered his heart.' <http://www.peoplescollectionwales.co.uk/Item/14492/col_1/tra_1/grp_1/com_1/tab_1/m_2> [07/05/13].

⁴⁴ 'Wilson came back into the shop and asked for the money from the drawer.' Williams, *Y Wladfa*, p.246.

'The bandit came out, saying that he knew that one hundred thousand dollars were expected there in those days, and he took the money that was in the drawer behind the counter.' Williams, *Creydro Patagonia*, p.55.

⁴⁵ 'In his terror, the Indian offered him 50 dollars from his own pocket but this was thrown back in his face, announcing that they only wanted to steal the Company's money.' Williams, *Y Wladfa*, p.246.

horses⁴⁶, only one mind, the other was still watching us two, when they had finished we were allowed out, and away they went as fast as their horses could take them.⁴⁷ And of course we had to break the terrible news to poor Mrs ap Iwan.⁴⁸ And indeed father and mother, she and the children have come through it extremely well. It is indeed true that our Mrs ap Iwan is a very sensible woman in every way and she shows this in these sorts of circumstances. The Store is now closed awaiting word from the Directors to hear what to do with the case. A crew of men from all over the place has gone after the murderer and the thief.⁴⁹ And the murderer and the thief cut the telegraph wire two or three times. But I hope that they will meet their end in the same way as they did to poor Mr ap Iwan.

Yes, isn't this a grave story, Father dying in bed from an illness is a big thing for someone but this is a terrible death indeed.⁵⁰ It shows that it is necessary for a man to be prepared

⁴⁶ 'When the two bandits had helped themselves to provisions, new saddles and bridles, and hundreds of bullets, they left [...]'. Williams, *Gwladfa Patagonia*, p.91.

⁴⁷ 'Having got the money, the two went out, leapt onto their horses the wrong way, and galloped away facing towards the village lest it came to pass they were attacked from there.' Williams, *Cymry Patagonia*, p.139. '[...] ordering the servants to stand outside until they had disappeared from sight.' Williams, *Gwladfa Patagonia*, p.91.

⁴⁸ Myfanwy Ruffudd, eldest daughter of Lewis Jones; married Llwyd ap Iwan on 11 June 1891. They had five children.

'Photograph: Everyone moved, from shivering or the stirring of the horses. In the cart a blurred family; on a white horse a blurred child. In the rear, also mounted, a blurred father. Within five years he will be dead, gunned down [...] Taken at some god-forsaken place where valley meets desert and the wind never stops.' Pearson, *Patagonia*.

'[...] her husband was killed by some of Butch Cassidy's gang.' Tom Vernon, *Fat Man in Argentina* (London: Penguin, 1990), p.216.

⁴⁹ Letter from the Chubut Mercantile Company to Mihangel ap Iwan, 11 January 1910:

'This letter was sent to Mihangel ap Iwan shortly after the death of his brother, Llwyd ap Iwan. [...] It is stated that the Company have agreed to contribute \$4,000 towards the search for the murderers. A further \$4,000 will be given as a reward to any person or group who succeed in capturing the offenders.' (National Library of Wales: CNP00276)

'Two armed groups of Welshmen went to look for them, in vain. They were caught and shot later by Argentinian soldiers.'

⁵⁰ 'In Patagonia, these are the forms of sudden death:

Attacked by bees.

Bitten in the genitals by a mule.

Childbirth

Drowning in a drainage channel.

Evisceration by the kick from a mule.

Falling down a well

Gunshot wounds: various

Heat exhaustion

Infancy

Jumping onto a pitchfork in a hay stack

Knife wounds sustained whilst transporting dangerous criminal

Losing the will

Measles

Nostalgia

Old age

Pleasure

Quirks of fate

Rolling under a moving wagon, reaper, mower

Suffocating in a hopper of grain

Thrust through the ribs with a spear

Untreated wounds of all types

Violent falls

to die. Well more than likely this terrible tale will be in y Rhedegydd⁵¹ and in all the English papers.⁵² Everybody says of Mr ap Iwan that there is no man as learned as he in this republic.⁵³ And the Old Indians here feel terribly for him. Everybody I meet, they all say Poor Mr ap Iwan in their own language. I don't know what you think of something like this, but I hope, father, that people like these get destroyed.

Well David Johnny Owen is up here in Nant y Pysgod, but John Owen is going to Chubut with the wagon about next Monday, and Dafydd is going to stay here with the sheep. The Boys here are coming along well, of course they have a good support to help them. I also expect to hear word from John that he is married. Well remember me to Tommy and the family, and show him this.

Well I hope that mother and you are all healthy and remember me to all at Capel Garmon without naming them.

I am your son
Robert⁵⁴

P.S. William Own Evans, Johnny's Evans's brother, has just brought a telegram here from the main office of Chubut (C.M.C.H. Office) but it says I must go down to Chubut to tell them this terrible story. So I'll set out tomorrow or the day after. Bob.⁵⁵

Winter colds

And that's but the half of it.' Pearson, *Welsh Landscapes*.

⁵¹ *Y Rhedegydd*, Welsh weekly newspaper, founded 1885, Blaenau Ffestiniog.

⁵² 'On Monday morning 3 January Mr John Edwards the well-known broker of Drury Lane and representative of Cwmni Masnachol y Camwy received a telegram containing the four following words: NORTH AMERICANS MURDERED AP IWAN WEDNESDAY.' *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 26 January 1910.

⁵³ 'Llwyd ap Iwan's body was buried in the cemetery in Esquel, and these words were carved in three languages on his tombstone:

He was murdered in the CMC Nant-y-Pysgod store, whilst defending the Company's property, and he was an honourable man. This was the greatest sacrifice. M.D. Jones and his wife for Y Wladfa.' Williams, *Cruydyro Patagonia*, p.55.

The small, round-topped memorial stone at Nant-y-Pysgod reads: Lle llofruddiwyd Llwyd ap Iwan Rhagfyr 29 1909. [Trans: The place where Llwyd ap Iwan was murdered December 29 1909.]

⁵⁴ Robert Roberts, born 15 July 1888.

In the photograph, the group includes two small boys in boaters and plus fours in front of Foelas House, Capel Garmon; they are Robert and his twin brother David (Dai).

<<http://www.flickr.com/photos/luniau-collen/771731808/in/set-72157600688994235/>> [7/05/13].

In the photograph, he sits alone, in starched collar.

<<http://www.flickr.com/photos/luniau-collen/801453241/in/set-72157600688994235/>> [7/05/13].

'Robert or Bob as he was known emigrated to the Colony with a flood of emigrants from the area at the beginning of the century.' Owen, 'Llofruddiaeth Llwyd ap Iwan', p.129.

In the photograph, he sits, trilby in hand, with David with whom he emigrated; David would remain in Patagonia.

<<http://www.flickr.com/photos/luniau-collen/741324935/in/set-72157600688994235/>> [7/05/13].

'Robert blamed himself to a large extent – because he had sent the outlaws to Llwyd ap Iwan's office. He came back almost immediately to Wales and his obsession with his guilt led to depression – and he had to spend time in Denbigh hospital, where he became friends with Caradog Pritchard (who wrote *Un Nos Ola Leuad*). Ann Parry Owen, 2011, private correspondence.

⁵⁵ 'And this is one of the lies that is told about Patagonia: on the afternoon of December 29, 1909 at the trading post belonging to the Welsh Chubut Co-operative Society at Nant-y-Pysgod in the foothills of the Andes, the manager Llwyd ap Iwan was gunned down, by Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.' Pearson, *Patagonia*.

Notes

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